



State of Arizona

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

Office of the Governor
1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007

Main Phone: 602-542-4331
Facsimile: 602-542-7601

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 11, 2013

CONTACT: Ann Dockendorff
(602) 542-7029
ADockendorff@az.gov

Mental Health Community Rallies behind Governor's Medicaid Plan

Restoration will Help Cut Costs, Safeguard Arizona's Mentally Ill, Protect Public Safety

PHOENIX – Governor Jan Brewer today was joined at the Arizona State Capitol by more than 100 mental health professionals, advocates and patients who expressed support for the Medicaid Restoration Plan.

The plan will help provide critically-necessary mental health services to tens of thousands of Arizonans in need, and will ensure coverage continues for an estimated 2,000 individuals suffering from Serious Mental Illness. This SMI population is among nearly 60,000 Arizonans who will lose Medicaid coverage at the end of the year unless the Arizona Legislature takes action.

“For many Arizonans in need of mental health services, access to the cost-effective care provided by AHCCCS can make the difference between getting a job or getting in trouble with the law – between becoming a productive member of society or becoming a statistic,” said Governor Brewer. “The good news is: mental illness can be effectively treated. By getting this population cost-effective AHCCCS care, we can improve public safety, reduce the burden on our criminal justice system and, ultimately, cut costs for taxpayers.”

The Governor's Medicaid Restoration Plan also is critical to Arizona veterans, many of whom lack VA coverage due to ineligibility or lack of access. Nearly 2 million veterans and their spouses lack health insurance in the United States, according to a report issued last month by the Urban Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. About 35 percent of these individuals would be eligible for coverage under the Affordable Care Act. This includes more than 43,000 uninsured veterans and their spouses in Arizona, 14,200 of whom have incomes low enough to be eligible for coverage via the Medicaid Restoration Plan.

“It is unacceptable to me that so many of our veterans who honorably served this nation would be without access to basic health care,” said Governor Brewer. “Fortunately, we have an opportunity to provide basic, cost-effective care to the men and women who have sacrificed for this nation. Let's not waste it!”

To date, the Governor's Medicaid Restoration Plan has been endorsed by more than 150 organizations representing business; health care; local government; education; the faith community; law enforcement and first responders; the Tribes; and other interests across Arizona. Most important, ARIZONA VOTERS have demonstrated their support of Medicaid by voting TWICE (in 1996 and 2000) to expand coverage.

For more information on the Governor's Medicaid Restoration Plan, visit: azgovernor.gov/Medicaid.asp or RestoringArizona.com.

###